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Supervised by:

Abdul Malik Mujahid

HEAD OFFICE

P.O. Box: 22743, Riyadh 11416 K.S.A. Tel: 00966-1-4033962/4043432 Fax: 4021659
E-mail: darussalam@awalnet.net.sa, riadh@dar-us-salam.com Website: www.dar-us-salam.com

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E-mail: houston@dar-us-salam.com

• Darussalam, New York 486 Atlantic Ave, Brooklyn

New York-11217, Tel: 001-718-625 5925

Fax: 718-625 1511

E-mail: darussalamny@hotmail.com

U.K

• Darussalam International Publications Ltd.

Leyton Business Centre

Unit-17, Etloe Road, Leyton, London, E10 7BT

Tel: 0044 20 8539 4885 Fax: 0044 20 8539 4889

Website: www.darussalam.com

Email: info@darussalam.com

• Darussalam International Publications Limited

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AUSTRALIA

• Darussalam: 153, Haldon St, Lakemba (Sydney)

NSW 2195, Australia

Tel: 0061-2-97407188 Fax: 0061-2-97407199

Mobile: 0061-414580813 Res: 0061-2-97580190

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• Islamic Book Service

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MALAYSIA

• Darussalam

Int'l Publishing & Distribution SDN BHD

D-2-12, Setiawangsa 11, Taman Setiawangsa

54200 Kuala Lumpur

Tel: 03-42528200 Fax: 03-42529200

Email: darussalam@streamyx.com

Website: www.darussalam.com.my

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• Editions & Librairie Essalam

135, Bd de Ménilmontant- 75011 Paris

Tél: 0033-01- 43 38 19 56/ 44 83

Fax: 0033-01- 43 57 44 31

E-mail: essalam@essalam.com.

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Tel: 0065-440 6924, 348 8344 Fax: 440 6724

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SOUTH AFRICA

• Islamic Da'wah Movement (IDM)

48009 Qualbert 4078 Durban, South Africa

Tel: 0027-31-304-6883 Fax: 0027-31-305-1292

E-mail: idm@ion.co.za

Muhammad

(peace and blessings of Allâh be upon him)

for the Global Village

An absorbing story and a modern
reading into the life and teachings
of the Prophet of Islam

Dr. Muhammad al-Haashimi al-Haamidi

Translated by: Nasiruddin al-Khattab

Edited by: Huda Khattab



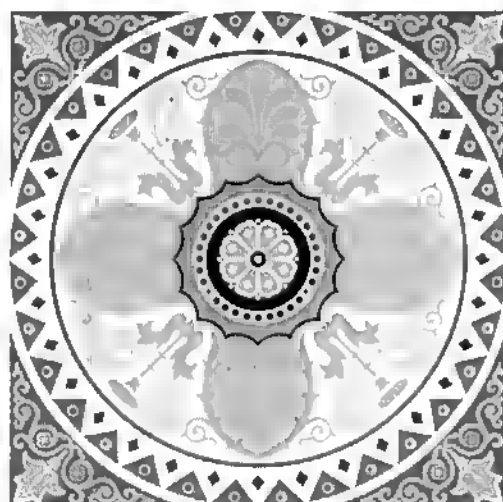
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*In the Name of Allâh,
the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful*



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Author's Introduction

I must start with a very big and warm welcome to readers of the English translation of my book. I greet you all with peace and love: Peace be upon you and the mercy of Allah and His blessings. I very much hope that you will spend a great time reading the absorbing story of the life and teachings of the Prophet ﷺ of Islam.

I started writing this book with the aim of explaining the secrets behind the appeal of Islam for hundreds of millions of people throughout history, foremost among which and the most important and influential, after the Holy Qur'ān, is the biography of the Prophet of Islam Muhammad bin 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abdul-Muttalib.

The Holy Qur'ān is the greatest miracle of Islam and the miracle of its Prophet (ﷺ). If we examine this miracle we will also realize the fundamental importance of the character of the person to whom the word of Allāh was revealed and who transmitted it to all of mankind, the character of Muhammad the Messenger of Allāh and the Seal of the Prophets, as all Muslims believe. I initially thought that I was going to discuss the Prophet's biography in one chapter of a book about the appeal of Islam, but I realized that reducing the brilliant story of the Prophet of Islam to a single chapter would be something very difficult, if not impossible.

As a result, I decided to expand it and discuss the biography of the Prophet of Islam in detail, in a separate book which is to

be the first in a series of books in which I will discuss the attractions of Islam. This book, which you have in your hands, is a summary of what I was able to study of the life of the Prophet of Islam (ﷺ), and the fruit of my efforts to present it in a contemporary style, simple yet academic, authentic and exciting, addressed to the inhabitants of the global village to which I belong and in which I believe.

I chose for the title of this book a phrase which expresses an idea that I believe in and about which I have been very enthusiastic for a long time. This phrase is "the Prophet's Biography for the Global Village". The global village is a reality that is gradually taking shape, through which communication between the nations of the world and the bonds between them are growing stronger in a manner that is unprecedented in human history. I feel that every step we take toward the single global village of which we are all a part and in which we celebrate the geographical, political and cultural diversity that exists in the world, the closer we get to the teachings and meanings of the Qur'ānic verse in which Allāh says:

"O mankind! We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know one another. Verily, the most honorable of you with Allāh is that (believer) who has At-Taḳwa [i.e. he is one of the Muttaqoon (the pious)]. Verily, Allāh is All-Knowing, All-Aware."

[al-Hujuraat 49:13].

The aim of this book and of the books that I hope to write in the series on the attraction of Islam is to research the reasons for the legendary rise of Islam in the face of the vicious campaigns that have targeted it and continue to do so, and to discover the reasons why Islam has remained so attractive and has captivated the hearts of hundreds of millions and the tens of thousands of newcomers into its ranks.

The attraction of Islam that has made it a gateway to

happiness, security, psychological and family stability and freedom for more than a billion people is the topic of this book and the books to follow it, *insha Allāh*. My hope is that I will be able to disclose its secrets by means of unbiased academic research and present it in a beautiful and simple language.

I strongly hope that this book will offer a basic resource to all academics and university students who are researching Islamic topics. However, this book is not for academics alone.

It is also addressed to the hundreds of millions of good women and men who are seeking the truth in major capitals, cities and rural areas in the West and in the East, in the North and in the South, who do not want the popular media to be their only source of knowledge about Islam and Muslims.

The book is also, of course, addressed to the Muslims in general, wherever they live, especially the youth, no matter what their nationality, language or country, because it is an effort to find out the secret of the attraction which builds a strong foundation for the noble and unbreakable bond between a peasant in Senegal and an engineer in Indonesia, between a female doctor in South Africa and a housewife in Uzbekistan.

It is also a book aimed at the decision-makers in parties and governments in all parts of the world, because understanding Islam as it really is and knowing the secret of its attraction is no longer an intellectual luxury or a secondary issue for which kings, presidents and ministers have no time; rather this matter has now become something that is directly connected to world peace and efforts to spare the world the danger of entering into an ongoing war in the name of religion or the conflict of civilizations.

The word Islam in Arabic has to do with peace (*salaam*). The greeting of Islam which the Muslim offers to all people and recites during his five daily prayers is *salaam* (peace).

Peace is what our world needs, so that Jews, Christians,

Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus and followers of other religions can live in harmony and peace, cooperating in building a civilization and helping themselves and their children, competing in serving the One and Only God, Who addresses them all in the Qur'ān where He says:

"O mankind! We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know one another. Verily, the most honorable of you with Allāh is that (believer) who has At-Taḳwa [i.e. he is one of the Muttaḳoon (the pious)]. Verily, Allāh is All-Knowing, All-Aware"

[al-Hujuraat 49:13].

This book is aimed at the goal of getting to know one another, as the Holy Qur'ān encourages mankind to do. For a number of years, the atmosphere of my beautiful city of London has given me the opportunity to engage in various efforts in this field. Hence, I founded the *Diplomat* magazine, for dialogue between different cultures and civilizations in Arabic and English, in 1996, and I organized a major conference for that purpose in the same year. In January 1997 I organized the first conference of its kind for dialogue between Muslims and Jews, and I published a number of articles and dialogues promoting tolerance in the weekly *al-Mustaḳillah* newspaper that I had founded in 1993, in which I wrote a weekly column called *Yawmiyyat Mawaatin 'Aalami* (Diary of a Global Citizen). Then I took these dialogues from the newspaper and magazine to millions of viewers on the al-Mustaḳillah satellite channel which I founded in 1999, which broadcasts to the Arab world, Europe and parts of Africa and Asia.

In the studios of the al-Mustaḳillah channel I chaired many discussions between Arab and American writers and politicians, and I hosted the first televised dialogue between Jews and Muslims. I brought it all together in 2004 in a new TV show called *Aal Ibrāhīm* (The Family of Abraham) which

focused on a monthly discussion between Jewish, Muslim and Christian scholars, to highlight the common ground between them and find out ways to broaden this common ground and the best ways to deal with differences without resorting to violence or war.

I hope that the new channel that I founded during the year 2005, the Democracy satellite channel, will continue to serve the idea of cooperation, friendship and peace among all people, the citizens of the one global village.

The attraction of Islam seems to be, at the initial stages of this research, to be synonymous with the attraction of peace, love and brotherhood among all people. I hope that the reader will find confirmation of this judgment with convincing evidence when he finishes reading this book, and also other books which I intend to publish with the help of Allāh in this series.

It is obvious, and it is my duty to confirm, that what I have written about the biography of the Prophet of Islam (ﷺ) does not cover it in all aspects. Such a thing is beyond my reach, and it may be beyond the reach of every writer and historian, because it has to do with the biography of the greatest man in the history of mankind. These chapters are the result of my humble efforts as a citizen of the global village to which all of mankind belongs. In writing this book I have relied on the primary authentic sources of Islamic history, and I hope that it will be a useful addition to the academic and historical literature which will enrich the global Arabic and Islamic library.

I wrote the first lines of this book in London, on Monday, 17 Jumaada al-Oola 1425 AH (5 July 2004) and I finished it with the help and grace of Allāh on Saturday, 14 Rabee' al-Awwal 1426 AH (22 April 2005). The English edition took some time to materialise. I am so happy it did and hope readers around the world would find it useful.

I hope that all readers will enjoy and benefit from this book, and I hope we will meet again in the second book in the series on the Attraction of Islam, *insha Allāh*. I greet you with the greeting of Islam: *as-salaamu 'alaykum wa rahmat-Allāhi wa barakaatuhu* (peace be upon you and the mercy of Allāh and His blessings).

London: 27/7/2008

Chapter 1

The forbearance and aspirations of 'Abdul-Muttalib

Muhammad bin 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abdul-Muttalib was born into an old and noble family, one of the most prominent Arab families in Makkah, five hundred and seventy years after the birth of the Messiah (ﷺ). His family belonged to a branch of Banu Haashim, part of the tribe of Quraysh, the most prominent and most famous of Arab tribes. Moosa (ﷺ) had been brought up in the palace of Pharaoh, and 'Eesa (Jesus) had been born, by Allāh's command, without a father; but the Prophet of Islam (ﷺ) was born an orphan, as his father 'Abdullāh died in al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah a few months after his marriage to Aaminah bint Wahb, the mother of the Prophet, and she was also a noble lady from a noble branch of the tribe of Quraysh, the branch of Banu Zuhrah.

'Abdullāh ibn 'Abdul-Muttalib, the father of the Prophet, had faced death in Makkah al-Mukarramah before his marriage to Aaminah, then he died in al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah. The exciting story of his brush with death deserves to be told, if only briefly. It began with something that happened earlier on. About two decades or so earlier, in the fourth or fifth decade of the sixth century CE, 'Abdul-Muttalib tried, with his only son at that time, to dig the well of Zamzam anew in order to provide a permanent source of fresh water near the Holy Ka'bah. The spring of Zamzam is another symbol that points to the lengthy history that connects Islam

with the House of Ibrāhīm al-Khaleel (عليه السلام). In Makkah itself, thousands of years earlier, Haajar, the wife of Ibrāhīm (عليه السلام), had nearly died of thirst with her infant son Ismā'il (عليه السلام), but Allāh provided for them the spring of Zamzam, which flowed with fresh water to quench the thirst of the noble mother, the wife of a noble Prophet and mother of another noble Prophet, and saved her and her son from certain death.

Until today, in the first third of the fifteenth Hijri century and the beginning of the twenty-first Gregorian century, the Muslims still remember the story of the family of Ibrāhīm, by means of an essential part of the obligatory duty of *Hajj* and the Sunnah of '*Umrah*', namely the *Sa'i* or going seven times between al-Safa' and al-Marwah, which are two neighboring hills between which Haajar ran when she was looking for a drop of water, until Zamzam sprang forth at the foot of al-Safa', a few meters away from the Holy Ka'bah.

During the following centuries, the desert sands covered up any trace of the well of Zamzam, but 'Abdul-Muttalib still remembered the story, and he saw in his dream the location of the well, between two of the idols of Quraysh which were called Asaaf and Naa'ilah. He wanted to excavate it and was confident of success and determined to perform this great service for the many visitors who came to Makkah on pilgrimage to the Ka'bah every year, to offer sacrifices to the many idols that they had taken as gods to bring them closer to Allāh, as they thought. This is why they were called *mushrikeen* (polytheists), because they believed in Allāh, but they did not devote their worship to Him alone, rather they associated with Him in their worship al-Laat and al-'Uzza and many other idols, believing that they were intermediaries with Allāh, and that they could bring benefits and cause harm, and that they could hear their prayers and answer them.

There did not seem to be any cause for objection on the part of Quraysh to 'Abdul-Muttalib's efforts to excavate the well of Zamzam, apart from the fact that the place that he had seen in

his dream, and in which he wanted to dig, was between two idols, Asaaf and Naa'ilah, and Quraysh were afraid of the wrath of these two idols, so they objected to 'Abdul-Muttalib's plans, even though he was one of their greatest leaders. 'Abdul-Muttalib had no one with him except his only son at that time, al-Haarith, and he was not able to support him and protect him in a society where family and tribal support played a powerful role. 'Abdul-Muttalib was angered and saddened by his people's objections, and he realized his desperate need for supporters who were of his own blood. So he made a vow to Allāh, swearing that if He gave him ten sons who were able to protect him and support him, he would sacrifice one of them before the Holy Ka'bah, as a sacrifice in acknowledgment of Allāh's bounty.

Days passed quickly as they have done since the beginning of time. In only a few years, 'Abdul-Muttalib got his wish and Allāh blessed him with ten sons who enjoyed good health and strength, the youngest of whom was 'Abdullāh. After their number was completed and his wish was fulfilled, 'Abdul-Muttalib decided to fulfil his vow and offer one of them as a sacrifice to his Lord.

The father of the Messenger:

The father told his sons of his intention and they did not object. They all gathered by the Ka'bah to carry out this difficult test. 'Abdul-Muttalib decided to draw lots in the manner that was well known at his time, to decide which of his sons would be the sacrifice. He took ten arrows, on each of which was written the name of one of his ten sons, then a neutral person drew the lot. The name drawn was that of the youngest and dearest to him of his sons, 'Abdullāh.

Every father knows that the youngest child holds a special place in the heart, and 'Abdul-Muttalib was no different from all other fathers. His love for 'Abdullāh was strong, and undoubtedly he wished that a different name had been drawn.

But the matter had been decided, and a man such as 'Abdul-Muttalib would not break a vow that he had made to his Lord, and he could not ask for the lots to be drawn again.

All of this was happening in front of the elite and common folk of Makkah. They all found it shocking that 'Abdullāh was to be sacrificed in fulfilment of his father's vow, so they decided to intervene and ask 'Abdul-Muttalib to delay the sacrifice of his son until they had consulted a wise woman to whom they used to go in Khaybar. All of Quraysh became involved in what was happening because the Arab tribe often played an important social role, as is still the case in societies where the tribe is still of major importance.

The wise woman heard the details of the story, then she asked the leaders of Quraysh about the blood money (*diyyah*) that the family of a killer would pay to the family of the slain, if the slain man's family agreed to accept the *diyyah* instead of the complete *qisas* (retaliation) which meant a life for a life. They told her that the usual *diyyah* was ten camels.

The wise woman advised the people of Quraysh to go back to the Ka'bah and draw lots again, between ten camels and 'Abdullāh. If 'Abdullāh's name was drawn, they should increase the *diyyah* until the lot fell to the *diyyah*. Quraysh agreed to this suggestion from the wise woman of Khaybar and were happy with this solution, which was also accepted by 'Abdul-Muttalib.

The first time lots were drawn between 'Abdullāh and ten camels, 'Abdullāh's name was drawn. Quraysh added ten more camels, and lots were drawn between 'Abdullāh and twenty camels. 'Abdullāh's name was drawn again. Quraysh added ten more camels but the result did not change. Quraysh kept adding more and more camels until the number reached ninety, but 'Abdullāh's name was drawn yet again.

The result did not change until the number of camels reached one hundred. Then the lot fell to the camels and not

'Abdullāh. Quraysh cheered at this outcome, because one of the noblest of their young men had been saved from death. But 'Abdul-Muttalib insisted on making sure, so lots were drawn a second time between the hundred camels and 'Abdullāh, and the lot again fell to the camels. Then 'Abdul-Muttalib asked that lots be drawn a third time, because he took his vow to Allāh very seriously, and he wanted to put his mind at rest that he had not broken his vow to Allāh, and to prove to his Creator that he was prepared to offer any sacrifice that was required to confirm his sincerity. This eagerness on the part of 'Abdul-Muttalib to fulfil his oath to his Lord centered on 'Abdullāh, who would subsequently become the husband of Aminah bint Wahb and the father of the Messenger of Islam (ﷺ). It was his life that was in the balance.

Lots were drawn for a third time, and again fell to the camels. 'Abdul-Muttalib breathed a sigh of relief, and the people of Quraysh who had acted as one to save 'Abdullāh were filled with joy. They all felt that divine help had intervened directly to protect this noble youth.

Another story from ancient history crossed 'Abdul-Muttalib's mind, a story that the Arabs had never forgotten, and which Islam later took as one of its two festivals and made it the greater of the only two religious festivals of the Muslims, which are *Eid al-Fitr* at the end of Ramadaan and the greater *Eid*, which is *Eid al-Adha*, at the end of the *Hajj* season. This is a real story which is very similar to what happened to 'Abdullāh, and it has two heroes: the first is Ibrāhīm al-Khaleel, and the second is his son Ismā'il, blessings and peace be upon them both.

The ransom of Ismā'il:

In that remote era of history, Ibrāhīm (عليه السلام) underwent a difficult test and was saved from the evil plot of his opponents who rejected his call to worship Allāh Alone and stop worshipping idols. Ibrāhīm (عليه السلام) wanted to show his people